

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES (ADVS)
ADVISORY COMMISSION
HELD THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2005

A public meeting of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) Advisory Commission was called to order on January 13, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the Arizona State Veteran Home, 4141 North Third Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

Advisory Commission Members

Present:

Webb Ellis, Chairperson
Joan Sisco, Vice Chairperson
Robert Sigholtz
Linda Fulkerson
Robert Boyd
Larry Brown
Mary Ellen Piotrowski

ADVS Staff

Present:

Patrick F. Chorpenning, Director, ADVS
Gary Noviello, CFO
Susan Aguinaldo, Asst. Administrator, ASVH
Mike Klier, Asst. Deputy Director, ADVS
Luella Emmons, Asst. Deputy Director, ADVS
Michelle Cummins, Manager, Human Resources
Doris Earley, Executive Assistant, ADVS

Commissioners Excused:

Phillip Quochytewa
Tom Dingwall

Special Guests:

Lee Borgen, VBC, Lake Havasu City
Robert Bohach, 1st Marine Division Association

Webb Ellis, Advisory Commission Chairperson determined that a quorum was present. Mr. Ellis announced that Commissioner Dingwall sent an e-mail notifying him that he is ill and asked to be excused from this meeting. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Patrick F. Chorpenning, ADVS Director introduced the following ADVS staff:

- Susan Aguinaldo, Administrator in Training, ASVH: Mr. Chorpenning reported that Ms. Aguinaldo recently passed the national nursing home administrator's examination and is waiting to take the state examination. When she passes the state examination, she will be moved into the position of ASVH Administrator.
- Mike Klier, Assistant Deputy Director: Mr. Chorpenning reported that Mr. Klier is responsible for engineering, dietary and human resources. He is also in charge of the veterans' license plate program.
- Luella Emmons, Assistant Deputy Director: Mr. Chorpenning stated that Ms. Emmons' primary responsibility is working together with Mike Klier and Susan Aguinaldo, recreation therapy, the nursing staff and the Veteran Services Division in Phoenix as well as in the outlying areas.
- Gary Noviello, Chief Financial Officer: Mr. Chorpenning announced that Mr. Noviello serves the agency as both the CFO and the head of the Fiduciary Division.
- Michelle Cummins, Human Resources Manager: Mr. Chorpenning reported that Ms. Cummins has many responsibilities and deals with a variety of issues while overseeing the human resources area. She trains supervisors in proper hiring

procedures, assists employees with healthcare benefit information and long and short-term disability information.

Mr. Chorpenning reported that Fred Ferguson, Deputy Director is not in attendance at this commission meeting as he is representing Mr. Chorpenning and the Governor at the funeral of Lance Corporal Jason Smith. Lance Corporal Smith was from Phoenix. He was killed in action on December 31st. Mr. Chorpenning stated that Mr. Ferguson is now physically located at the Director's office where he is instrumental in assisting him with military affairs issues that include the military installations as well as the Arizona National Guard.

Commissioner Ellis called for a review of the November 30, 2004 minutes of the Advisory Commission meeting. Commissioner Sigholtz moved that the minutes be accepted as published. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Gary Noviello, Chief Financial Officer gave an update on the financial status of the agency. He provided the commission members with a spreadsheet that depicted actual revenues, expenses and cash balance through December 31, 2004.

Mike Klier reported on the redesign of the veterans' license plates and presented a sample of the new design. Mr. Klier stated that last year all the state commanders and adjutants of the major service organizations were called together to work on the concept of the new plates. He stated that he later met with Jackie Allgood who works for the Motor Vehicle Division. Mr. Klier stated that she has been most supportive of our efforts. He also reported that the timing was good on the passage of the bill for motorcycle plates. The motorcycle plates should be available to order by the end of April.

Susan Aguinaldo reported that the resident census at the Home is currently 190. She stated they have all been very busy because the State Surveyors have been at the Home since Monday. Mr. Klier mentioned that the engineering and dietary departments had been surveyed and they had "0" defects.

Luella Emmons reported that each month VSD averages 500-700 claims filed. A high percentage of the claims are approved. Mr. Chorpenning explained that for the approximately 565,000 veterans in Arizona, there are only 18 Certified Benefit Counselors to serve the population.

Commissioner Ellis requested that Mr. Chorpenning prepare a one-page information paper to show the value of the Veteran Benefit Counselor. Dr. Sigholtz asked if we might impose upon the Governor to write a strong letter to the legislature showing the major inconsistency in service delivery to the veterans. Mr. Chorpenning stated that he thought it might work better if a fact sheet is prepared and a letter signed by all the Advisory Commission members is written to the Governor. A sit down meeting with the Governor could be requested at that time. Mr. Chorpenning commented that the Governor is a veteran advocate and in her State of the State address she had prepared comments to make the legislature aware of the need for a Veteran Home in southern Arizona, a cemetery in northern Arizona and working in partnership with homeless veterans' organizations.

Commissioner Ellis announced that the Veterans Hall of Fame induction ceremony is scheduled for October 27, 2005. He would like Governor Napolitano to give the key note address.

Mr. Chorpenning was asked to give background and updated information regarding the proposed Southern Arizona Veterans Home. Mr. Chorpenning explained that he went back to Washington, D.C. in July and met with Gordon Mansfield, Deputy Secretary, William McLemore, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs and Frank Salvas, Chief, State Home Construction Program for Veterans Affairs. One of the purposes of the meeting was to explain the approach that the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services wants to utilize in building a new state veteran home in southern Arizona; the other purpose was to elevate our proposal on the VA's building priority list.

Following that meeting, it was discovered that there was some misunderstanding or confusion on the part of Mr. Salvas. It was determined that Mr. Salvas was being too literal in his interpretation of VA Construction grants and PLTO concept, and if Mr. Salvas' course of action was accepted, the proposal for the agency's second veteran home would not be on the VA's priority list.

Mr. Chorpenning stated that he made another trip back to Washington, D.C. in early December and again met with Mr. Salvas and Mr. Mansfield. Mr. Chorpenning reported that we have been placed on the application priority list. There were 127 applications listed and prioritized. We ended up number 125 on the priority list for the Southern Arizona Veteran Home. We were number 54 on the Home Grant listing for the Arizona State Veteran Home. There are two more grant applications that we are applying for. One grant proposal is to put in a laundry at the dock area and the second grant proposal is to create a large communal dining area for the residents on the first floor at the Arizona State Veteran Home.

Mr. Chorpenning stated we would write a letter to request a meeting with Mr. Salvas and General Counsel in Washington, D.C. He stated that he would like to have someone on the commission who can gain a good understanding of the entire concept to go back with him to Washington, D.C. when he presents this to the Veterans Administration. Commissioner Joan Sisco volunteered to be this liaison.

Commissioner Ellis presented the draft Strategic Plan. He thanked Commissioners Mary Ellen Piotrowski and Joan Sisco and the agency's strategic planner, Gabe Forsberg for their hard work on the draft plan. Commissioner Ellis stated that he would like to have this in final form and requested the commissioners e-mail him or phone him with their comments.

Goal: To Advise the Governor of Arizona and the Director, ADVS: Objective #2:
Participate with other Arizona commissions, boards, agencies and organizations as appropriate: Mr. Chorpenning recommended that this Commission work with the City of Phoenix Military Veterans Commission. Mr. Chorpenning has been invited to attend the next Phoenix Military Veterans Commission meeting in February. After discussion, the request was modified to include that the Chair of the Advisory Commission go with the Director to the meeting.

Goal: to increase statewide military/veteran outreach: Objective #2: Geographically divide the State into regions along county boundaries: Discussion was held and it was determined that there are 15 counties in Arizona and eight congressional districts. The determination was made that it would be better to divide by congressional district. Commissioners Ellis, Sisco and Piotrowski will report back at the next commission meeting with a particular alignment by congressional district. Mr. Chorpenning stated that he has access to congressional maps and supportive data.

Goal: To advise the Governor of Arizona and the Director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS): Objective #4: Participate with National Association of State Directors of Veterans' Affairs (NASDVA) as appropriate: Mr. Chorpenning stated that he will be attending the NASDVA spring conference in Washington, D.C. the week of March 21st through March 25th. He further stated that he would like the commissioners to all become associate members of NASDVA and be eligible to attend the conference in Washington D.C. that week. The cost will be approximately \$1,500 per commissioner for the trip and a block of rooms are generally available for members which make the cost reasonable. The Commissioners were instructed to advise Doris Earley if they desire to go on this trip and she will make the travel arrangements. He commented that commission members will probably leave for Washington on March 20th and return to Phoenix on March 26th. Costs for the trip will be paid out of the Veterans Donation Fund.

Mr. Chorpenning commented that he would like to see the Commission focus on a position paper on fund raising for the agency. Within this same scope, the Commission can develop a list of things they would like to do. It was requested that Commissioner Sisco give a presentation (briefing) to the Advisory Commission members at the February meeting regarding Veterans First Ltd. a 501(c) 3 that is being utilized in the fund raising process for the Iraqi War Memorial Monument, the Medal of Honor Society convention, etc. Ms. Sisco is the President of Veterans First.

The next scheduled Advisory Commission meeting is Thursday, February 10, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the Arizona State Veteran Home, 4141 North Third Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

Commissioner Ellis called for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Thru: _____ Date: _____
Patrick F. Chorpenning, Director

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____
Webb Ellis, Chairperson

Recorder/Transcriber: _____ Date: _____
Doris Earley, Executive
Assistant